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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 PA-04

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1883
INFO USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS PARIS 20575

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SUBJECT: FRENCH PRESS REACTION TO PRESIDENT FORD'S PRESS CONFERENCE.

1. FRENCH TELEVISION WEDNESDAY NIGHT, (THE NEWSCAST TOOK PLACE AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME AS PRESIDENT FORD'S NEWS CONFERENCE) SAID PRESIDENT FORD WAS EXPECTED TO RESPOND TO REMARKS IN PRESIDENT GISCARD'S TUESDAY NIGHT TELEVISION ADDRESS THAT EUROPE HAD BEEN CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT FROM AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHES FOR SOME TIME.

2. CORRESPONDENT J. JACQUET-FRANCILLON REPORTED FROM WASHINGTON IN FIGARO THURSDAY:"DID GERALD FORD WANT TO JUSTIFY VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING? ANYWAY HE DID ALL THAT COULD POSSIBLY BE DONE, VOLUNTARILY OR UNVOLONTARILY, IN HIS FIRST NEWS CONFERENCE TO CONFIRM THE IMPRESSION THAT WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICA INTO HERSELF WHICH THE FRENCH PRESIDENT NOTED IN HIS TV SPEECH. FACING TV CAMERAS, MR. FORD DISPLAYED GREAT AUTHORITY AND PERFECT SELF-MASTERY, AND DID NOT STUMBLE ON ANY ONE QUESTION. BUT IN FACT, NO ONE REALLY TRIED TO TRAP HIM. NONE OF THE BIG STARS OF THE PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION STOOD UP TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS. REPRESENTATIVES OF SMALL LOCAL
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NEWSPAPERS THEREFORE STOLE THE SHOW, AND DOMESTIC

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PROBLEMS WERE VIRTUALLY THE ONLY ONES RAISED."

3. FRANCE-SOIR TITLED A REPORT FROM WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT SEGONZAC:"NOT A WORD ON EUROPE DURING GERALD FORD'S PRESS CONFERENCE." SEGONZAC SAID: "GERALD FORD HAS EASILY CLEARED THE FIRST OBSTACLE OF HIS TERM OF OFFICE: THE NEWS CONFERENCE.... AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE QUESTIONS ASKED WERE RATHER HARMLESS....FOREIGN POLICY WAS HARDLY DISCUSSED. FORD CONFIRMED THAT ROCKEFELLER, HIS NEW VICE PRESIDENT, WOULD HELP HIM IN THAT FIELD. HE SUGGESTED TO THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES THAT HE MIGHT BE LESS RIGID THAN NIXON TOWARD CUBA. ONCE AGAIN HE DID NOT SPEAK THE WORD 'EUROPE'. FORD HAS THUS CONFIRMED THE IMPRESSION HE HAS GIVEN FOR THE PAST THREE WEEKS.
WITH A
REFRESHING SIMPLICITY, HE HAS CREATED A NEW ATMOSPHERE IN WASHINGTON AND DE-NIXONIZED THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE ADMINISTRATION. AND ABOVE ALL, HE HAS DEMONSTRATED BY BOTH HIS WORDS AND ACTS HIS ABILITY TO ACT DELIBERATELY WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE IT. IN SO LITTLE TIME, HE HAS CREATED SUCH AN ATMOSPHERE OF CONFIDENCE THAT EVERYONE--EVEN HIS POLITICAL ADVERSARIES-- IS WILLING TO GRANT HIM THE MEANS HE IS ASKING TO FULFILL HIS TASK. BY THE WAY, HE ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO RE-UP: HE WILL BE A CANDIDATE IN 1976."

4. LE MONDE CARRIED A REPORT FROM WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT HENRI PIERRE UNDER THE HEADLINE:"IN HIS FIRST NEWS CONFERENCE, PRESIDENT FORD WISHED ADMINISTRATION ETHICS TO BE INSPIRED BY THE EXAMPLE HE SETS." PIERRE REPORTED:"FOR HIS FIRST NEWS CONFERENCE, PRESIDENT FORD HAD A FULL HOUSE.... IN CONTRAST TO EISENHOWER OR TRUMAN, TO WHOM HE IS INEVITABLY COMPARED, FORD DID NOT SEEK REFUGE IN THE TRADITIONAL 'NO COMMENT' TO ELUDE QUESTIONS. BUT THE INSUFFICIENCY, THE DRYNESS, OF SOME RESPONSES LEFT MANY JOURNALISTS HUNGRY. THE LOW PROPORTION OF FOREIGN POLICY QUESTIONS CLEARLY SHOWED THE PREOCCUPATIONS OF THE PUBLIC. RATHER THAN ABOUT THE FUTURE OF EUROPE, THE AMERICANS
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ARE WORRIED ABOUT INFLATION AND EVEN ABOUT PRESIDENT NIXON'S FATE."

5. OTHER NEWSPAPERS MERELY CARRIED BRIEF WIRE SERVICE SUMMARIES OF THE NEWS CONFERENCE UNDER THE FOLLOWING HEADINGS: AURORE:"FORD : I WILL BE A CANDIDATE IN 1976"; QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS AND COMBAT:"FORD: MERCY FOR NIXON"; LES ECHOS:"FORD: AN EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS FIRST NEWS

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CONFERENCE."
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
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